

Turves Green Boys' Technology and Humanities College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103500
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	308339
Inspection dates	21–22 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Richard Masterton

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll	
School	647
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stuart Hosefield
Headteacher	David Williams
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2004
School address	Turves Green Northfield Birmingham B31 4BS
Telephone number	0121 675 4129
Fax number	0121 478 3705

Age group	11-16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a relatively small technology and humanities college with approximately 650 boys. It serves the Longbridge district of Birmingham. A small number of the pupils are from minority ethnic communities. Standards on entry are broadly average. About one fifth of pupils, an average proportion, are on the special needs register. The school was designated a specialist technology college in 1995 and has recently been awarded a second specialist status in the humanities. There are extensive links with other schools within the south western districts of Birmingham and shared sports facilities with the adjacent girls' school.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Turves Green Boys Technology and Humanities College is a good and inclusive school. Pupils feel that they are known as individuals, will be well cared for and looked after, will be safe and, most importantly, will be able to learn. In a school marked by generally good behaviour and an ease of communication between pupils and teachers, there is a tradition of good achievement and developing maturity. Pupils' personal development is good; they enjoy their learning and are well prepared for the future. Boys grow to become responsible, active members of their school and they are proud to attend. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and senior managers accurately analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the school and identify what action is needed for improvement. Their belief, and it works, is that change is best achieved by giving responsibility to middle managers and teachers. They are supported by the senior staff in developing the objectivity that enables them to pinpoint what must improve and the changes that need to be made. Senior managers have introduced a culture of review, drawing strength from a welldeveloped pattern of highly effective cooperation with neighbouring schools that adds breadth to the professional knowledge and drive of teaching staff. This has had a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Self-evaluation within the school is good at all levels. There is outstanding capacity to improve, as shown by management vigilance and effective action taken to sustain and increase achievement. The curriculum is good. It is rich and lively, offering some special features such as dance for younger pupils and a range of technical courses that have been developed as the school has acquired technology college status. A wide range of popular voluntary activities supplements the taught curriculum. Competitions held in school promote a series of sporting and other interests, including poetry, and provide pupils with additional enjoyment in their learning. Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils are well looked after and properly safeguarded. They learn in safe conditions, they are not bullied or racially harassed and they know there is always an adult who is a friend to whom they can turn. Teaching is good. Most lessons are very interesting with plenty of work for pupils to undertake. The school is working to improve teaching, particularly to capture the enthusiasm and readiness for learning of younger pupils and to stretch those who can learn more quickly. Overall achievement is good. In this school, all groups of pupils generally do well including those from minority ethnic communities and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, better progress is required of pupils during their first three years. Through Years 7 to 9, standards are average. There has been a trend of improving achievement shown in the national tests taken at the end of Year 9 but there was a dip in 2007, particularly in science. Pupils' best progress is made during their last two years where teachers have developed a range of very successful strategies to help pupils study and to appreciate the value of so doing. Pupils' achievement is clearly good in Years 10 and 11, and GCSE standards in 2007 were higher than the national average for boys, particularly in terms of the proportion gaining five or more GCSE subjects graded in the range A* to C. Governors provide effective oversight and support for the work of the school and challenge managers over plans for further improvement but lack some of the precise progress benchmarks that can inform their monitoring and evaluation.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the standards and achievement of pupils, particularly in Years 7 to 9.
- Improve teaching methods to ensure that appropriately challenging work is provided for pupils of all abilities in each class.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

National test results for Year 9 pupils in 2007 show that boys' standards are average. Results in science were weaker than mathematics and English. There has been some fluctuation in GCSE results annually but in 2007 no fewer than two thirds of Year 11 pupils sitting GCSE examinations gained five or more subjects with grades in the range A* to C. This is higher than the national average for boys. Good GCSE results in science, technology, music, graphics, media studies and food technology have contributed to this success and show the impact of the specialist college status of the school in enhancing pupils' achievement. Pupils' results are more variable when both English and mathematics are considered together. A number of pupils with good overall grades did not reach grade C in one of these vital subjects. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 has been rising steadily, but dipped in the most recent tests. When pupils enter Years 10 and 11, their progress rapidly accelerates. Their GCSE results show that their overall achievement in school is good, and particularly so in the last two years of their studies. Pupils respond well to the demanding targets they are set, particularly in light of their average standards on entering school. These targets support their motivation and all groups of learners make good progress including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils from minority ethnic communities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good. The vast majority of pupils are polite, caring and have a positive attitude to school. Relationships between students and with teachers are cooperative and productive. Pupils look forward to coming to school, attend regularly, find that the curriculum meets their needs and that most subjects stimulate their interest and participation. Pupils enjoy learning, feel safe, and are comfortable about approaching staff if they have personal problems. There is very little bullying, and when it does occur pupils are confident that it will be dealt with effectively. Pupils value the emphasis the school places on rewards. Pupils' behaviour around school and in most lessons is good, except where teaching does not fully engage them. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as is their understanding of citizenship. They are complimentary about the assemblies that raise their understanding of different topics. Pupils understand how to live healthily. The provision of a different range of food at break and lunchtime has resulted in increased numbers of students making healthy choices. Many take part in voluntary sports. Pupils contribute actively to the school and wider community through the school council and their involvement in extra-curricular activities. They show concern for others through their support of charities, participate in music making, including a steel band, and in drama events which they present to members of the local community. Pupils are well prepared for their future education and employment through work experience and the school's strong links with the careers service and other outside agencies. The restricted teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) means that the school cannot ensure that all pupils leave with all the necessary skills

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good quality teaching enables pupils to do well in their work. They enjoy learning because lessons are made interesting, most go at a brisk pace and the work set is usually challenging. Assessment information is used sensibly to set demanding targets for learning, which are reviewed clearly in lessons. School leaders know where improvement to teaching could be made. They have introduced a number of effective strategies to ensure there is more consistency in its quality across subjects and year groups. At present they are working to improve the match of work to pupils' individual needs by refining lesson planning to show the expectations of those in different ability groups. Such precision in planning is not yet consistent amongst all teachers. In lessons, teaching assistants give effective support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which ensures they learn as well as pupils in other groups. It is evident that there is some outstanding teaching in the school. The pupils say that this really motivates them to work hard and achieve successfully. Pupils add that they learn a lot of new things at such times and they enjoy the fact that the teaching style is not always the same. They appreciate the opportunities provided in many lessons to take charge of their own learning and to work practically or in small groups.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

There is a good curriculum which is broad and balanced. It meets statutory requirements, reflects the specialist status of the school and provides a good stimulus for learning. For example, pupils' skills and knowledge are increased effectively with participation in dance as part of the physical education curriculum and when developing sequencing skills in music using computer technology. Not all pupils are taught ICT as a separate subject in Years 10 and 11. They use computers in other subjects but do not have sufficient opportunities to gather all the necessary ICT knowledge and skills. There is particular variety and depth in the curriculum for Years 10 and 11, with a range of academic and vocational courses that cater well for varying interests and abilities. Pupils may also attempt early entry in some subjects at GCSE. The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development and wellbeing. There are a good variety and range of popular extra-curricular opportunities, especially in sports and music that pupils value and enjoy. The library is well used and pupils participate in after-school book clubs with great enthusiasm.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school systematically monitors and reviews pupils' achievement, attendance and well-being. Pupils receive good encouragement from the marking of their work but not all marking shows them how to improve. Procedures for recording academic progress are good, and staff quickly identify and intervene with any pupils who are not making the expected progress. Good information and guidance are given to students to help them to make choices when selecting courses or when transferring to education or employment after leaving school. Pupils know there is always someone to turn to if they need help. Vulnerable pupils, who are well known by their teachers, receive good support and this sustains their development of academic and personal skills. Pupils feel secure in school and trust the adults who work with them. One parent

wrote saying, 'My child had behaviour difficulties early in school life due to disability, however he will leave a happy, confident young man, due to the understanding and support of the staff of this school.' Pupils' views are valued and the school has made changes as a result, for example by the provision of a water vending machine in the sports hall. Behaviour managers and the development of an inclusion unit have improved pupils' behaviour. Child protection arrangements meet current requirements. Health and safety checks are carried out regularly. The school has effective working links and partnerships with other organisations, such as health and social services and other schools that provide pupils with effective expertise and support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has developed an effective and innovatory approach to aspects of leadership and management that trusts and empowers senior and middle managers. He has promoted a culture where all staff are included within a process of evaluation, review and improvement. They are self-critical and welcome challenge from managers, their professional peers and their colleagues in neighbouring schools who contribute to training and staff development. This produces a common sense of commitment and purpose at every level and a willingness to look for solutions that can help raise standards. Owing to the effectiveness of its leadership, the school has gained, and now extended, its specialist college designation. In turn, this has led to innovatory features in school management. A very special feature is the extent to which professional cooperation between different schools has contributed powerfully to departmental self-evaluation. Senior managers correctly identify aspects of school provision where improvement is needed and action is in place or imminent. There is secure planning for improvement but plans do not include precisely defined success criteria that can more easily enable governors to monitor progress. Pupils' opinions are valued and respected. Through the school council and with consultation, pupils have been included in decision making about many aspects of school development. Pupils and their parents recognise the quality of the school. This respect strengthens the school community. Senior managers carefully monitor the quality of provision, particularly the work of teachers and the measures that develop the behaviour and character of the pupils. Governors provide appropriate support to the school and exercise a rigorous level of challenge and scrutiny, particularly through the work of sub-committees.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

23 November 2007 Dear Pupils Inspection of Turves Green Boys Technology and Humanities College, Birmingham, B31 4BS My colleagues and I greatly enjoyed our visit to your school. We looked at the work you were doing, the standards you reach and the quality of education that your school provides. It was also most helpful to meet you and to ask for your views. You gave us some of the most important evidence that we needed. Thank you for your assistance and the politeness that you showed us. You attend a good school. Teachers and other staff look after you properly. Your curriculum is good and you are taught well. We were impressed by the standards you reach by the end of your time in school and, in particular, the rapid progress that you make in your last two years. What was very special was that so very many of you are proud to attend your school, which is helping you to develop responsibility, confidence and maturity. In our report, we list two main ways where we feel that your school can become even more effective. We have asked the school managers to take steps to improve standards and achievement in Years 7 to 9. If you could make the same progress in those years as you do in the last two...! The sky is the limit as they say. In addition, we are asking that teachers ensure there is work provided in each lesson to match everyone's ability more closely, with support for those of you who learn more slowly and really challenging work for others who like to race ahead. You have a very good relationship with your teachers who value your views and opinions. Please assist and advise them as they try out new measures to help your progress so they can quickly identify the best ideas and methods to help you along. Yours sincerely R Douglas Masterton Lead inspector

23 November 2007

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R Douglas Masterton
Lead inspector